PATENT

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of: Chen, et al.	)	
	)	Examiner: Stephens, Jacqueline F.
Serial No.: 10/036,736	)	
	)	Art Unit: 3761
Filed: December 21, 2001	)	
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Title: Sponge-Like Pad Comprising Paper Layers and Method of Manufacture	)	

Mailstop Appeal Brief - Patents
Honorable Commissioner for Patents
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office
Post Office Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

BRIEF ON APPEAL

Honorable Commissioner:

Appellants submit the following brief on appeal in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 41.37. Applicants respectfully request favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance in view of the following:

1. REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest in this matter is the assignee of record, Kimberly-Clark Worldwide, Inc.

2. RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

There are no other appeals or interferences known to the Appellants or the Appellants' legal representative which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

3. STATUS OF CLAIMS

Currently, claims 1-8, 67-100, 129-134, and 136-137 remain pending in the present application, including independent claims 1, 67, 114, and 127. In an amendment filed with this Brief on Appeal, claims 101-113 and 135 were canceled to simplify the issues on appeal. Previously, claims 9-66 and 128 were canceled. Also, claims 78, 87, 88, 98-100, 111, and 122-126 were previously withdrawn. All the claims are attached hereto in the Claims Appendix.

All of the examined claims, claims 1-8, 67-77, 79-86, 89-97, 114-121, 127, 129-134, and 136-137, stand rejected in the Final Office Action of Sept. 25, 2007, including independent claims 1, 67, 114, and 127.

The rejection of all pending claims is hereby appealed.

4. STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

To the Appellants' knowledge, all amendments have been entered into the record.

5. SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

Independent claim 1 is generally directed to an absorbent sponge-like product for cleaning a surface. The sponge-like product comprises a multi-layer compressible substrate and an outer cover. See e.g., Figs. 2 and 3; pg. 33, lines 6-25 (depicting a cross-section of an pad 20 comprising a two-sided cover 46 and stack 22 of wet resilient tissue layers 24 with interply bonding from binder material 26). The substrate includes a plurality of stacked plies of a textured paper web having an Overall Surface Depth of greater than about 0.2mm. See e.g., pg. 12, lines 8-16 and pg. 44, lines 14-20. The paper web comprises pulp fibers (see e.g., pg., 1, lines 26-28), contains a wet strength agent (see e.g., pg. 2, lines 2-6 and pg. 52, lines 2-30), and has a basis weight of at least about 10 gsm (see e.g., pg. 48, lines 10-13). The plies are attached together. See e.g., Fig. 2 and pg. 33, lines 6-25. The outer cover comprises a flexible porous material to allow water to pass therethrough and encloses the compressible substrate. See e.g., Figs. 2 and 3; pg. 2, lines 23-25. Abrasive particles are attached to the outer cover to facilitate scrubbing of the surface. See e.g., Fig. 2 (abrasive material 52 attached to cover 46); pg. 29, lines 21-27. The abrasive particles comprise filler particles or microspheres. See e.g., pg. 34, line 16 – pg. 35, line 1.

Independent claim 67 is generally directed to an absorbent sponge-like product for cleaning a surface. The sponge-like product comprises a multi-layer compressible substrate, an outer cover, and abrasive fibers. See e.g., Figs. 2 and 3; pg. 33, lines 6-25 (depicting a cross-section of an pad 20 comprising a two-sided cover 46 and stack 22 of wet resilient tissue layers 24 with interply bonding from binder material 26). The substrate comprises a plurality of stacked plies of a textured paper web having an Overall Surface Depth of greater than about 0.2mm. See e.g., pg. 12, lines 8-16 and pg. 44, lines 14-20. The paper web comprises pulp fibers (see e.g., pg., 1, lines 26-28), contains

a wet strength agent (see e.g., pg. 2, lines 2-6 and pg. 52, lines 2-30), and has a basis weight of at least about 10 gsm (see e.g., pg. 48, lines 10-13). The plies are attached together. See e.g., Fig. 2 and pg. 33, lines 6-25. The outer cover comprises a flexible porous material that allows water to pass therethrough, and encloses the compressible substrate. See e.g., Figs. 2 and 3; pg. 2, lines 23-25. Abrasive fibers are attached to the outer cover to facilitate scrubbing the surface. The abrasive fibers include meltblown shot. See e.g., pg. 35, lines 2-27.

Independent claim 114 is generally directed to an absorbent sponge-like product for cleaning a surface. The sponge-like product comprises a multi-layer compressible substrate and an outer cover. See e.g., Figs. 2 and 3; pg. 33, lines 6-25 (depicting a cross-section of an pad 20 comprising a two-sided cover 46 and stack 22 of wet resilient tissue layers 24 with interply bonding from binder material 26). The substrate comprises a plurality of stacked plies of a paper web comprising softwood fibers and high-yield fibers. See e.g., pg. 47, line 27 – pg. 48, line 9. The paper web has a basis weight of from about 15 gsm to about 80 gsm (see e.g., pg. 48, lines 10-13), has a molded textured surface (see e.g., pg. 48, line 14 – pg. 49, line 16), and contains a wet strength agent (see e.g., pg. 2, lines 2-6 and pg. 52, lines 2-30). The plies of the substrate are attached together at selected locations by thermally bonding binder fibers between the plies. Figs. 2 and 3; pg. 33, lines 6-25 (depicting a cross-section of an pad 20 comprising a two-sided cover 46 and stack 22 of wet resilient tissue layers 24 with interply bonding from binder material 26). The outer cover allows water to pass therethrough and encloses the compressible substrate. See e.g., Figs. 2 and 3; pg. 2, lines 23-25. The outer cover includes a first primary surface and a secondary primary surface. See e.g., Figs. 2 and 3;

pg. 40, lines 10-19. The first primary surface is made from a meltspun nonwoven web having an abrasive surface that comprises meltblown shot. See e.g., pg. 35, lines 2-27.

Independent claim 127 is generally directed to a method of making a sponge-like pad for cleaning a surface. According to the method, a plurality of textured, wet resilient paper web layers comprising papermaking fibers is provided. See e.g., pg. 48, line 14 – pg. 49, line 16. Thermoplastic binder fibers are deposited on one or more of the wet resilient paper web layers. See e.g., pg. 55, lines 4-30. Three or more of the paper web layers are stacked such that the thermoplastic binder fibers are between the adjacent layers. See e.g., Figs. 2 and 3; pg. 33, lines 6-25 (depicting a cross-section of an pad 20 comprising a two-sided cover 46 and stack 22 of wet resilient tissue layers 24 with interply bonding from binder material 26). The binder fibers are heated to melt at least a portion of the fibers. See e.g., pg. 62, lines 7-18. The melted portion of the binder fibers are cooled such that the binder fibers fuse and join the adjacent layers together to form an integral stack of paper web layers. See e.g., pg 55, lines 21-30. The stack is enclosed in a liquid pervious cover that defines an abrasive surface comprising meltblown shot. See e.g., Figs. 2 and 3; pg. 2, lines 23-25; pg. 35, lines 2-27.

6. GROUNDS OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

In the Final Office Action, claims 1-5, 7, 67-71, 73, 75-77, 79-85, 92-97, 114-117, 120, 121, 127, 129-134, 136, and 137 (including independent claims 1, 67, 114, and 127) were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) in view of U.S. Pat. No. 5,990,377 to Chen, et al.

Also, claims 2, 6, 8, 68, 72, 74, 86, 89, 90, 91, 101-113, 118, 119, and 135 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Chen, et al.

The rejection of all pending claims is hereby appealed.

7. ARGUMENT

Appellants respectfully submit that the presently pending claims are patentable over the cited reference.

I. Claims 1-5, 7, 67-71, 73, 75-77, 79-85, 92-97, 114-117, 120, 121, 127, 129-134, 136, and 137 are not anticipated by Chen, et al.

A claim is anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102 only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found in a single prior art reference. See Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of Calif., 814 F.2d 628 (Fed. Cir. 1987). Although anticipation under Section 102 is not an *ipsissimis verbis* test (e.g., identity of terminology is not required), the elements must be arranged as required by the claim, and the identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the claim. In re Bond, 910 F.2d 831 (Fed. Cir. 1990); Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co., 868 F.2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1989).

In rejecting independent claims 1, 67, 114, and 127, the Office Action cites the teachings of Chen, et al., particularly Col. 36, ll. 64 to Col. 37, ll. 16, as anticipating independent claims 1, 67, 114, and 127. Chen, et al. teaches two embodiments that the Office Action refers to in rejecting the claims. First, Chen, et al. states that an absorbent core of an absorbent article can be "replaced by a series of resilient basesheet layers, such as the wet resilient uncreped, through-air-dried ("UCTAD") basesheets... and a dual-zoned absorbent web containing hydrophobic material... placed in superposed relation" on the series of resilient basesheet layers. Col. 36, line 64 - Col. 37, line 6.

Chen, et al. teaches that this embodiment can replace the absorbent core utilized in an absorbent structure, which has a liquid impervious backsheet that prevents leakage. Nowhere does Chen, et al. disclose or even suggest, however, that this replacement for an absorbent core can be used for cleaning a surface. Thus, Chen, et al. does not

disclose or suggest the presence of any type of abrasive surface or particles on this outer surface. Furthermore, it would not make sense to one of ordinary skill in the art to include some type of abrasive surface or particles on the outer surface for scrubbing. Chen, et al. does not teach all of the limitations of independent claims 1, 67, 114, and 127 in this first embodiment.

Secondly, Chen, et al. discloses that a "hand towel" can be made from the uncreped, non-compressively dried basesheets. Col. 37, lines 12-50. This hand towel is a "thin when dry, thick when wet" because of the application pattern of hydrophobic material to the web. However, in this embodiment, no multi-layer compressible substrate comprising a plurality of stacked plies is disclosed. The hydrophilic fibers of the basesheet are utilized to absorb fluids. Thus, Chen, et al. does not teach all of the limitations of independent claims 1, 67, 114, and 127 in this second embodiment.

A. Independent claim 1 is not anticipated by Chen, et al.

In addition to the above deficiencies, Chen, et al. fails to teach all of the limitations of independent claim 1. Specifically, Chen, et al. fails to teach or even suggest in any embodiment the use of an abrasive particles comprising filler particles or microspheres attached to an outer cover, as required by independent claims 1. The Office Action states that Chen, et al. discloses adhesive containing regions that are noticeably stiffer than the surrounding base sheet, citing col. 45, lines 59-60. However, the disclosure of a "stiffer" adhesive does not equate to the abrasive particles that facilitates scrubbing of a surface. Also, this example is directed to a single layer sheet, not a multi-layer substrate comprising a plurality of stacked plies of a textured paper web, such as in claim 1. Thus, independent claims 1 is not anticipated by Chen, et al.

B. Independent claims 67, 114, and 127 are not anticipated by Chen, et al.

Likewise, Chen, et al. fails to disclose the use of meltblown shot as an abrasive surface, as required by independent claims 67, 114, and 127. Thus, independent claims 67, 114, and 127 are not anticipated by Chen, et al. The Office Action states that Chen, et al. discloses adhesive containing regions that are noticeably stiffer than the surrounding base sheet, citing col. 45, lines 59-60. However, the disclosure of a "stiffer" adhesive does not equate to the meltblown shot that facilitates scrubbing of a surface. Also, this example is directed to a single layer sheet, not a multi-layer substrate comprising a plurality of stacked plies of a textured paper web. As such, Applicants respectfully submit that Chen, et al. does not anticipate the pending independent claims of the present application.

II. Claims 2, 6, 8, 68, 72, 74, 86, 89, 90, 91, 118, and 119 are not obvious in view of Chen, et al.

In rejecting claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103, it is incumbent upon the Examiner to establish a factual basis to support the legal conclusion of obviousness. See In re Fine, 837 F.2d 1071, 1073, 5 USPQ2d 1596, 1598 (Fed. Cir. 1988). In so doing, the Examiner must make the factual determinations set forth in Graham v. John Deere Co., 383 U.S. 1, 17, 148 USPQ 459, 467 (1966). "[T]he examiner bears the initial burden, on review of the prior art or on any other ground, of presenting a prima facie case of unpatentability." In re Oetiker, 977 F.2d 1443, 1445, 24 USPQ2d 1443, 1444 (Fed. Cir. 1992). Furthermore, "'there must be some articulated reasoning with some rational underpinning to support the legal conclusion of obviousness'... [H]owever, the analysis need not seek out precise teachings directed to the specific subject matter of the challenged claim, for a court can take account of the inferences and creative steps that a person of ordinary skill in the art would employ." KSR Int'l Co. v. Teleflex Inc., 127 S. Ct. 1727, 82 USPQ2d

1385, 1396 (2007) (quoting In re Kahn, 441 F.3d 977, 988, 78 USPQ2d 1329, 1336 (Fed. Cir. 2006)). Accordingly, even if all elements of a claim are disclosed in various prior art references, the claimed invention taken as a whole cannot be said to be obvious without some reason given in the prior art why one of ordinary skill would have been prompted to modify the teachings of the references to arrive at the claimed invention. See e.g., In re Regel, 188 U.S.P.Q. 132 (C.C.P.A. 1975).

As pointed out above, Chen, et al. fails to teach a multi-layer compressible substrate having abrasive particles comprising filler particles or microspheres or abrasive fibers (e.g., comprising meltblown shot). As such, no rational exists for one of ordinary skill in the art having common sense at the time of the invention to have produced such a substrate. Applicants note that in order to establish *prima facie* obviousness, all of the claimed limitations must be taught or suggested in the prior art.

In conclusion, it is respectfully submitted that the claims are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and that the present application is in complete condition for allowance. As such, Appellants respectfully request issuance of the patent.

Respectfully submitted,

DORITY & MANNING,
ATTORNEYS AT LAW, P.A.

March 13, 2008
Date

Alan R. Marshall
Registration No. 56,405

P.O. Box 1449
Greenville, SC 29602
Telephone: (864) 271-1592
Facsimile: (864) 233-7342

8. CLAIMS APPENDIX

1. (Rejected) An absorbent sponge-like product for cleaning a surface, the sponge-like product comprising:

a multi-layer compressible substrate, said substrate comprising a plurality of stacked plies of a textured paper web, the paper web having an Overall Surface Depth of greater than about 0.2mm, the paper web comprising pulp fibers, the paper web having a basis weight of at least about 10 gsm, the paper web containing a wet strength agent, said plies being attached together;

an outer cover that allows water to pass therethrough, said compressible substrate being enclosed by the outer cover, the outer cover comprising a flexible porous material; and

abrasive particles attached to the outer cover to facilitate scrubbing of the surface, wherein the abrasive particles comprise filler particles or microspheres.

2. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 1, wherein the stack plies are formed from a single folded paper web.

3. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 1, wherein the paper web further comprises wet resilient fibers, the wet resilient fibers comprising thermomechanical pulp, said wet resilient fibers being present in the paper web in an amount from about 10% to about 50% by weight based upon the total weight of fibers present within the web.

4. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 1, wherein the paper web has a molded textured surface created during throughdrying.

5. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 1, wherein the outer cover comprises a material selected from the group consisting of a meltblown web, a

spunbond web, a paper towel, a bonded carded web, a scrim material, a mesh material, a net, an apertured material, and mixtures thereof.

6. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 1, wherein the substrate comprises at least 10 stacked plies.

7. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 1, wherein certain of the stacked plies are apertured.

8. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 1, wherein the paper web has an internal pore volume of at least 50%.

9-66. (Canceled)

67. (Rejected) An absorbent sponge-like product for cleaning a surface, the sponge-like product comprising:

a multi-layer compressible substrate, said substrate comprising a plurality of stacked plies of a textured paper web, the paper web having an Overall Surface Depth of greater than about 0.2mm, the paper web comprising pulp fibers, the paper web having a basis weight of at least about 10 gsm, the paper web containing a wet strength agent, said plies being attached together;

an outer cover that allows water to pass therethrough, said compressible substrate being enclosed by the outer cover, the outer cover comprising a flexible porous material; and

abrasive fibers attached to the outer cover to facilitate scrubbing the surface, wherein the abrasive fibers include meltblown shot.

68. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 67, wherein the stack plies are formed from a single folded paper web.

69. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 67, wherein the paper web further comprises wet resilient fibers, the wet resilient fibers comprising thermomechanical pulp, said wet resilient fibers being present in the paper web in an amount from about 10% to about 50% by weight based upon the total weight of fibers present within the web.

70. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 67, wherein the paper web has a molded textured surface created during throughdrying.

71. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 67, wherein the outer cover comprises a material selected from the group consisting of a meltblown web, a spunbond web, a paper towel, a bonded carded web, a scrim material, a mesh material, a net, an apertured material, and mixtures thereof.

72. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 67, wherein the substrate comprises at least 10 stacked plies.

73. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 67, wherein certain of the stacked plies are apertured.

74. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 67, wherein the paper web has an internal pore volume of at least 50%.

75. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 67, wherein the plies are attached together at selected locations by thermal bonding binder fibers between the plies.

76. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 75, wherein the binder fibers comprise multicomponent fibers.

77. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 75, wherein the binder fibers are applied to each ply in an amount of from about 1% to about 5% by weight of each ply.

78. (Withdrawn) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 67, wherein the plies are attached together at selected locations using an adhesive.

79. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 67, wherein the outer covering includes a first section attached to a second section, the first section having an abrasive surface.

80. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 79, wherein the first section comprises a meltblown web having shot present on the surface of the web.

81. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 80, wherein the second section comprises a spunbond web or a paper towel.

82. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 67, wherein the sponge-like product contains an additive associated with the compressible substrate, the additive comprising a soap, a detergent, a buffering agent, an antimicrobial agent, a skin wellness agent, an indicator for an analyte, a lotion, or mixtures thereof.

83. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 67, wherein the outer cover is sealed around the compressible substrate.

84. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 67, wherein the textured paper web has a Wet Compressed Bulk of at least about 6 cubic centimeters per gram.

85. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 67, wherein the textured paper web has a Wet Springback value of at least about 0.6.

86. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 67, wherein the compressible substrate has an Absorption Capacity of at least about 6.

87. (Withdrawn) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 67, wherein the plies are attached together at selected locations using a hot melt adhesive.

88. (Withdrawn) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 87, wherein the holt melt adhesive is printed onto certain of the textured paper webs.

89. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 67, wherein the product has an Absorption Capacity of at least 12 gm/gm.

90. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 67, wherein the product has an Absorption Capacity of at least 17 gm/gm.

91. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 67, wherein the product has a Wet Compressive Recovery of at least 75%.

92. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 67, wherein the outer cover comprises a meltblown web formed directly on an outer ply of the multi-layer compressible substrate.

93. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 67, wherein the outer cover comprises a meltblown web having an open structure, the meltblown web comprising fibers having a mean diameter of greater than about 0.2 mm.

94. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 67 that is substantially latex free.

95. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 67, further comprising an absorbent layer of foam.

96. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 67, further comprising an indicator that detects the presence of an analyte.

97. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 96, wherein the indicator changes color in the presence of an analyte selected from biological pathogens and toxins.

98. (Withdrawn) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 67, comprising a binder material that has been printed in a pattern to one or more of the plies.

99. (Withdrawn) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 98, wherein the printed binder material is a hotmelt that was applied in the molten state.

100. (Withdrawn) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 98, wherein the printed binder material is a latex.

101-113. (Canceled)

114. (Rejected) An absorbent sponge-like product for cleaning a surface, the sponge-like product comprising:

a multi-layer compressible substrate, said substrate comprising a plurality of stacked plies of a paper web, the paper web comprising softwood fibers and high-yield fibers, the paper web having a basis weight of from about 15 gsm to about 80 gsm, the paper web having a molded textured surface, the paper web containing a wet strength agent, and wherein the plies of the substrate are attached together at selected locations by thermally bonding binder fibers between the plies; and

an outer cover that allows water to pass therethrough, said compressible substrate being enclosed by the outer cover, the outer cover including a first primary surface and a secondary primary surface, said first primary surface being made from a meltspun nonwoven web having an abrasive surface defining said primary surface, wherein said abrasive surface comprises meltblown shot.

115. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 114, wherein said first primary surface comprises a meltblown web having shot present on the surface of the web.

116. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 114, wherein the secondary primary surface is made from a paper web, a spunbond web, or a meltblown web.

117. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 114, wherein the binder fibers are applied to each ply in an amount from about 1% to about 5% by weight.

118. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 114, wherein the substrate comprises at least ten stacked plies.

119. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 118, wherein the paper web has an internal pore volume of at least 50%.

120. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 114, wherein the second primary surface is water impermeable.

121. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 114, further comprising a water impervious barrier material positioned in between said first primary surface and said second primary surface, said barrier material for preventing fluids contacting the first primary surface to reach the second primary surface.

122. (Withdrawn) A tool for scrubbing surfaces comprising:

a handle; and

a sponge-like product connected to the handle, said sponge-like product comprising:

(a) a multi-layer compressible substrate, said substrate comprising a plurality of stacked plies of an uncreped throughdried paper web, the paper web

comprising pulp fibers, the paper web having a basis weight of from about 15 gsm to about 80 gsm, the paper web containing a wet strength agent, said plies being attached together; and

(b) an outer cover that allows water to pass therethrough, said compressible substrate being enclosed by the outer cover, the outer cover being made from a material being selected from the group consisting of a meltblown web, a spunbond web, a paper towel, a bonded carded web, a scrim material, a mesh material, a net, an apertured material, and mixtures thereof.

123. (Withdrawn) A tool as defined in claim 122, wherein the tool comprises a mop.

124. (Withdrawn) A tool as defined in claim 122, wherein the paper web comprises softwood fibers and high-yield fibers, said paper web having a molded textured surface created during throughdrying, said substrate including at least ten stacked plies, said plies being attached together at selected locations by thermally bonding binder fibers between the plies.

125. (Withdrawn) A tool as defined in claim 124, wherein the binder fibers comprise bicomponent fibers.

126. (Withdrawn) A tool as defined in claim 125, wherein the bicomponent fibers are incorporated into the paper web during formation.

127. (Rejected) A method of making a sponge-like pad for cleaning a surface, the method comprising:

providing a plurality of textured, wet resilient paper web layers comprising papermaking fibers;

disposing thermoplastic binder fibers on one or more of the wet resilient paper web layers;

stacking three or more of the paper web layers such that the thermoplastic binder fibers are between the adjacent layers;

heating the binder fibers to melt at least a portion of the fibers;

cooling the melted portion of the binder fibers, whereby the binder fibers fuse and join the adjacent layers together to form an integral stack of paper web layers; and

enclosing the stack in a liquid pervious cover, wherein said liquid pervious cover defines an abrasive surface comprising meltblown shot.

128. (Canceled)

129. (Rejected) A method as defined in claim 127, wherein the textured paper web layers comprise throughdried paper webs containing high-yield fibers, the paper webs having an Overall Surface Depth of greater than about 0.2 mm.

130. (Rejected) A method as defined in claim 127, further comprising applying a molten polymer to the surface of at least one paper web layer of the plurality of paper web layers and allowing the polymer to harden to form an abrasive surface on the paper web.

131. (Rejected) A method as defined in claim 127, further comprising applying a curable polymer to the surface of at least one paper web layer of the plurality of paper web layers and curing the polymer to form an abrasive surface on the paper web.

132. (Rejected) A method as defined in claim 131, wherein the curable polymer is a photocurable resin and wherein curing the polymer comprises applying light to the resin to photocure it.

133. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 1, wherein the entire outer cover allows water to pass therethrough.

134. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 67, wherein the entire outer cover allows water to pass therethrough.

135. (Canceled)

136. (Rejected) A sponge-like product as defined in claim 114, wherein the entire outer cover allows water to pass therethrough.

137. (Rejected) A method as in claim 127, wherein the entire liquid pervious cover allows water to pass therethrough.

9. EVIDENCE APPENDIX

None

10. RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

None